

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Fristam Pumps, Inc.

Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Fristam Pumps Commits To Continuous Improvement And Sees Immediate Results

Client Profile:

Fristam Pumps, Inc., a Middleton, Wisconsin manufacturer of pumps and pumping equipment, employs 55 people.

Situation:

Between 1995 and 2000, Fristam Pumps experienced a 14 percent sales growth each year, but its success was marred by a 55 percent on-time delivery rate. Production delays caused inventory overage and stretched the company's line of credit. Fristam Pumps decided it needed to change its procedures, and contacted the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

WMEP had worked with Fristam Pumps on several successful lean manufacturing improvement projects, and now encouraged the company to undertake an enterprise-wide lean manufacturing transformation. WMEP began the company's lean journey with a Lean Enterprise Culture project, which changes engrained attitudes toward work and engenders a continuous improvement mindset throughout the company.

WMEP then helped the company develop goals and communicate management support. At least one member of Fristam's executive team is directly involved in every project, working together with staff to find solutions. Fristam also asked WMEP to create an organizational structure to support these changes, and to accelerate and enhance decision-making at the point of knowledge. WMEP helped Fristam Pumps establish a core lean project management team. WMEP additionally helped create a steering team to guide the continuous improvement effort. Finally, WMEP led Fristam Pumps' employees through a value stream mapping exercise to analyze existing processes and prioritize opportunities for improvement. With the data gathered from the value stream map, they were able to create a "roadmap" for the company's lean journey.

Results:

Engaged employees in improvement process; increased performance.
Committed to the ongoing improvement process.
Improved on-time delivery rate from 55 to 95 percent.
Doubled inventory turns.

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Improved changeover times.
Generated \$1.8 million in free cash flow.

Testimonial:

“Two and a half years ago, we were in a state of panic all the time, scrambling constantly. That’s gone. We now may spend one hour looking forward, versus 10 hours in the past to fix a problem... Things that used to turn the plant upside down are now handled routinely.”

John Delmage, President